

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

Required Report - public distribution

Date: 1/23/2014

GAIN Report Number: JO14001

Jordan

Agricultural Biotechnology Annual

Enter a Descriptive Report Name

Approved By:

Ron Verdonk

Prepared By:

Anita Katial and Mohamed Khraishy

Report Highlights:

Jordan's Ministry of Environment introduced a new draft biosafety law that would regulate agricultural biotechnology products. FAS/Amman and Jordanian traders are actively lobbying the Government of Jordan (GOJ) to adopt regulations that are science-based and would not hinder production and trade in products of biotechnology.

Section I. Executive Summary:

Jordan's Ministry of Environment (MOE) introduced a new "draft" biosafety law regulating agricultural genetically engineered (GE) products. FAS/Amman and Jordanian traders are actively lobbying the GOJ to adopt regulations that are science-based and would not hinder commodities produced from biotech seed varieties or food products made, in part, from such commodities.

Barley and wheat are the only two cereal crops produced in Jordan. In seasons with adequate rainfall, Jordan produces only 10 percent of its consumption. The GOJ dedicates only a small amount of resources to agricultural biotechnology research that is carried out by universities working in

cooperation with the National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension (NCARE) and regional institutions such as the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).

Jordan's dairy and poultry sectors import the majority of their corn and soybean meal needs from the United States, Argentina, Brazil, and Black Sea countries. There is currently no testing mechanism to determine if such feed components contain transgenic varieties.

Section II. Plant Biotechnology Trade and Production:

- a. **PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:** N/A
- b. **COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION:** To date, no biotech crops have been knowingly produced or approved in the country.
- c. **EXPORTS:** N/A
- d. **IMPORTS:** Jordan's dairy and poultry sectors import the majority of their corn and soybean meal and silage needs from the United States and other origins. There is currently no testing mechanism to determine if such feed contains transgenic varieties.

FOOD AID RECIPIENT COUNTRIES: Jordan was a Food for Progress Program recipient in FY 2011 and 2012, receiving approximately 100,000 MT of U.S. wheat in both years combined. In FY 2013 Jordan also received food aid under United Nations programs aimed at half a million Syrian and more than a million Palestinian refugees. There are no biotech wheat varieties currently marketed.

Section III. Plant Biotechnology Policy:

- a. **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:** The Ministry of Environment's proposed *draft* biosafety law would replace the existing regulations that are based on the Cartagena Protocol, which have been adhered to at the MOE (<http://www.moenv.gov.jo>) since it entered into force in August 2009 and is still considered the reference. The regulation covers trade in GMOs, mainly agricultural biotech products. Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) established a new entity called the Phytosanitary and Biodiversity Department to handle biotech trade issues. Jordan's Food and Drug Administration (JFDA) will also likely play a role in implementing any GMO regulations.
- b. **APPROVALS:** If a product is declared or labeled as a GE or biotech product it will not be allowed to enter the country.
- c. **FIELD TESTING:** N/A
- d. **STACKED EVENT APPROVALS:** N/A
- e. **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:** The GOJ's seed registration is a lengthy process and can take months. The person registering the seed must provide sufficient information about the uniqueness of the new variety, which is under the mandate of Plant Varieties Protection law (PVP) and to testify with documents that is not a biotech seed.
- f. **COEXISTANCE:** N/A
- g. **LABELING:** While Jordan does not have a mandatory GE labeling law, the Ministry of Environment's new draft biosafety law will require labeling. The draft states that each food and feed importer has to affix a label stating whether the product contains GMOs in accordance with

the JISM regulation. The implementing agencies will be the MOA and JFDA. No trade barriers have been imposed on any imported products, to date. If this draft law moves forward, the committee that conducts technical studies and approvals of biotechnology products would decide on restricting trade of any products.

As matters stand, the proposed law holds importers fully liable for ensuring that the label accurately describes the contents. A shipment may be rejected based on label ambiguity, even if it is only a printing error.

As yet, Jordan does not have a clear-cut policy on genetically engineered plants, GOJ authorities are likely to reject any imports that contain a label that states “contains” or “may contain” GMOs.

h) **TRADE BARRIERS:** As of the writing of this report, no U.S. grain or oilseed shipments have been rejected for a reason related to genetic engineering.

i) **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR):** The legal system facilitates and protects the acquisition and disposition of all property rights. Prior to its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), Jordan passed several new laws to improve the protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), patents, copyrights and trademarks. TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights)-consistent laws now protect trade secrets, plant varieties and semiconductor chip designs. The law requires registration of copyrights, patents and trademarks. Copyrights must be registered at the National Library, a part of the Ministry of Culture. Patents must be registered with the Registrar of Patents and Trademarks at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Jordan is in the process of acceding to the Patent Cooperation Treaty and to the protocol relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the registration of marks, and is preparing appropriate adjustments to fit the international requirements.

Jordan's Protecting Plant Varieties (PVP) law enacted in the year 2000 and corresponding PVP regulations in 2002, provided for the establishment of an office to register new plant varieties at the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). To date, one Jordanian grape variety and nine American strawberry varieties have been registered, and ten other varieties are in the process of registration.

A key component of the PVP is that reputable seed producers will not export their products to countries that do not observe IPR for agricultural products. The cost of registering seeds at Jordan's PVP office ranges from \$3,000-\$5,000 per plant variety. Not all seed importers are interested in PVP registering, since most are hybrid seeds, the first generation offspring of two different plants, have their own IPR self-protection.

Jordan has been a full member of World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) since May 24, 2004, and a full member of Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), since October 24, 2004. So far 10 varieties have been registered by the office, one Jordanian and 9 American varieties.

j) **CARTAGENA PROTOCOL RATIFICATION:** Jordan became a signatory of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety on October 11, 2000 and ratified it on February 9th, 2004, but this has had no impact on GE products/imports to date.

k) **INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/FOR A:** Jordan has avoided taking any position on any

international stage on the matter of biotechnology that could affect its political and trade relations with either the U.S. or the EU.

l) RELATED ISSUES: N/A

m) MONITORING AND TESTING: Jordan does not have the capacity for testing GE products.

n) LOW LEVEL PRESENCE POLICY: N/A

Section IV. Plant Biotechnology Marketing Issues:

- a. MARKET ACCEPTANCE: Producers are willing to utilize biotechnology if it will increase profits. With importers, the question of profit will play a major role in their trade decisions. Consumers could potentially be reluctant in their purchases of such products if labeling is instituted. This is due to their lack of knowledge about GMOs and the availability of substitute products. Thus, a mandatory labeling requirement may negatively affect consumer demand. In addition, religious beliefs may play a critical role in the consumer's decision-making process.
- a. PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS: There are some anti-GE groups in Jordan, however they are not very active.
- b. MARKETING STUDIES: N/A

Section V. Plant Biotechnology Capacity Building and Outreach:

- a. ACTIVITIES: N/A
- b. STRATEGIES AND NEEDS: Jordanian officials would benefit from having a legal expert work with them on their draft biosafety law to ensure that it is in line with the GOJ's obligations as a signatory under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB). General education on agricultural bioengineering could also be beneficial to decision makers in the GOJ. Finally, seeing biotech products commercially produced would further strengthen their understanding of the product.

Section VI. Animal Biotechnology:

PART E: Production and Trade

- a. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: N/A
- b. COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: N/A
- c. EXPORTS: N/A
- d. IMPORTS: N/A

PART F: Policy

- a. REGULATION: N/A
- b. LABELING AND TRACEABILITY: N/A
- c. TRADE BARRIERS: N/A
- d. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR): N/A
- e. INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/FOR A: N/A

PART G: Marketing

- a. MARKET ACCEPTANCE: N/A
- b. PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS: N/A
- c. MARKETING STUDIES: N/A

PART H: Capacity Building and Outreach

- a. ACTIVITIES: N/A
- b. STRATEGIES AND NEEDS: N/A

Section VII. Author Defined:

For further help, please contact the Office of Agricultural Affairs, American Embassy, PO Box 354, Amman, Jordan, Phone: +(962-6) 5906056, Fax: +(962-6) 5906223, E-Mail: AgAmman@fas.usda.gov - Mohamed.khraishy@usda.gov - khraishym@state.gov

work week: Sunday-Thursday, GMT+2, Washington + 7